

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are all the claims pending in the application.

As preliminary matters, the Examiner withdrew the objection to the drawings and initialed the references listed on Form PTO/SB/08 submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on April 3, 2006. Reference JP 2001-520795 is listed twice on Form PTO/SB/08. Applicant has contacted the Examiner who indicated that this reference was considered. The Examiner crossed out the second occurrence of this reference to remedy this error.

The Examiner maintained the rejection of claims 1 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102. In addition, the Examiner now rejected claim 5 and newly added claims 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102. The Examiner also rejected previously added claims 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Claims 2-4 contain allowable subject matter.

Applicant does not acquiesce to the Examiner's reasons for rejecting the claims. However, to expedite the prosecution of the above-identified application and without commenting on the substantive merits of the Examiner's rejections, Applicant rewrites allowable claims 2 and 4 into their independent forms and cancels claims 1 and 5-12. Accordingly, as acknowledged by the Examiner, claims 2 and 4 are allowable. Claim 3 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency on claim 2.

Applicant is not conceding in this application that original claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Nataliya Dvorson
Registration No. 56,616

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON DC SUGHRUE/265550

65565
CUSTOMER NUMBER

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